

Sanitized - Approved For Release

LOS ANGELES TIMES

MAR 11 1964

**BY THE WAY****Another Kennedy  
Choice Is Gone**

BY BILL HENRY

With Secretary Robert S. McNamara and his Pentagon posse completing their on-the-scene investigation we'll soon be hearing how the war in Vietnam is going and what we propose to do to get cracking again out there. Meantime you probably would like to know how the Vietnam war is going on the Washington front. Well, casualties are high and the most recent victim is another highly-placed member of the Kennedy establishment—Roger Hilsman. His name can now be added to the growing list of important Kennedy appointees no longer on the White House team. Hilsman was a typical Kennedy favorite—young, dashing, intellectual. His departure was brushed off by President Johnson at his news conference 10 days ago in a manner calculated to cover up the good-sized shakeup in the Department of State. Hilsman, as assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, was the man charged with the diplomatic side of the Vietnam problem. On the face of it he looked like an ideal choice. He had fought with distinction out in that part of the world in World War II as a member of Merrill's Marauders in Burma. He was a West Point graduate. He was a red-hot expert on "intelligence," having been director of intelligence and research for the Department of State. In short, judged by the written record of his experience—which is the criterion by which most individuals are chosen for top government jobs—Hilsman came pretty close to looking like the ideal man to supervise our effort to keep Vietnam out of the grasping clutches of the infiltrating Reds.

COPYRIGHT

**Man in Charge Gets the Blame**

It is rather difficult to put your finger on exactly what caused Hilsman's downfall. Perhaps the easy way to do it is to say that he was in charge and the job wasn't getting done. Also, he apparently wasn't too easy to get along with. He's entitled to a bit of sympathy here—consider the situation: (1) We weren't directly involved—it's Vietnam's war; (2) It is being fought thousands of miles away from home; (3) It is a war Americans don't quite understand and aren't very enthusiastic about; (4) U.S. partici-

pation was divided, without very clear lines of authority, between Defense, State and the Central Intelligence Agency. Hilsman was the author of a widely-publicized telegram which is regarded as having encouraged the overthrow of the Diem government in Vietnam, which has been followed by a steady disintegration of the Vietnamese war effort. It turned out that while Diem, the Mandarin-type, was extremely difficult to deal with and did not always cooperate, things went better under his administration than they ever have since under two succeeding military juntas.

**JFK Brain Trust Disintegrating**

There is good reason to believe that one of the individuals in Washington with whom Hilsman clashed was the man who has succeeded him, Bill Bundy. While Secretary McNamara is obviously the "man in charge" of our military participation in Vietnam, the day-to-day supervision of our effort out there was left to his assistant secretary for foreign military aid and national security affairs, William P. Bundy. Bundy, oddly, has had much the same background as Hilsman—a military record in World War II of proven courage and a long record in the Central Intelligence Agency where his judgment was recognized by a high post in this sensitive organization. In any event, Hilsman's name can now be added to those of Schlesinger, Sorenson and Murrow at the head of the list of Kennedy appointees who, for one reason or another, have departed the government in recent days.

COPYRIGHT